THE

WEEKLY ENTERTAINER.

For MONDAY, December 5, 1808.

THE LETTER-BOX.

No. 59.

TO THE EDITOR.

Longa dies homini docuit parere leones,
Longa dies molli saxa peredit aquâ.

TIB.

THE lapse of time, Mr. Editor, whilst it affords a constant and melancholy memento of the brevity of existence, fails not to prove how much may be effected, even in its swift flight, by patience and perseverance. The most trivial labour seems burthensome at the outset, and presents innumerable obstacles to the completion of our hopes; but when, by a laudable resolution, we accomplish our undertaking, we calmly gaze on the retrospect, and smile at the imaginary objects of our terror. Some excellent author, (Machiavel, I believe), says—

"In all thy undertakings let a reasonable assurance animate thy endeavours; if thou despairest of success, thou shalt not succeed."

"Terrify not thy soul with vain fears, neither let thy heart sink within thee from the phantom of imagination."

"If thou believest a thing to be impossible, thy despondency shall make it so; but he that persevereth shall overcome all difficulties."

I was led to the consideration of this subject from a review of the preceding numbers of the Letter-Box. When I commenced my humble speculations, with the fond hope of contributing to the amusement of your numerous readers, little did

I imagine my time or abilities would enable me to proceed to the length I have at last attained. I fully expected, indeed, that the invitation given in my introductory letter would have obtained me such assistance from other correspondents, as to render my undertaking less formidable to myself, and more acceptable to the public; but in this I have been lamentably disappointed, and obliged to assume a number of fictitious names, in order to excite interest by variety.

Many of my friends entertain a mistaken notion, that my literary recreations are impediments to the labours of my profession; but where or what is the profession (let me ask them) from which in the course of a week a man cannot snatch a single hour for amusement? And an hour is amply sufficient for the composition of the longest letter I ever sent you, when the subject is previously and properly understood. Whether or not it would be *prudent*, so far as it interests my reputation as a writer, to continue these speculations, I do not pretend to determine; but there are many absent friends, to the gratification of whose wishes even prudence must become subservient. To those whom love and friendship have endeared to each other, how dreadful is a separation! With what pleasing yet painful emotions have I looked at the rising moon, and fondly fancied that some far-distant acquaintance was gazing at the same object, inspired with a sympathy of reflections! And thus it frequently delights me, and stimulates my exertions, when I consider that many an absent friend has every week an opportunity of reading the sentiments of my heart through the medium of your valuable miscellany. This circumstance alone is sufficient to obviate the strongest objections which can be adduced as a bar to my proceeding.

The idea of absent friends and lovers gazing at the moon is very natural to the soul of sensibility. I have some beautiful verses on the occasion; by whom written I know not, but they are too good to be omitted on so fair an opportunity of introducing them.

"Sweet moon! if like Cretona's sage
By any spell my hand could dare
To make thy disk its ample page,
And write my thoughts, my wishes there.
How many a friend whose careless eye
Now wanders o'er thy starry sky,
Would smile upon thy orb to meet
The recollection kind and sweet—
The reveries of fond regret—
The promise never to forget,
And all my heart and soul could send
To many a dear—lov'd—distant friend."

It

It is impossible to make a better conclusion; but I must not forego a duty incumbent on me as the author of "The Letter-Box,"—a duty which painful experience obliges me to fulfil; and that is, to enter my protest against the behaviour of all such as, in defiance of common civility, neglect to *answer* letters. Whether on love, friendship, or business, such a neglect is highly culpable, and diametrically contrary to the rules of politeness. People may complain of the tediousness of the task, and declare they know not what to say! But this is a glaring absurdity,—the offspring of idleness—and the parent of doubt, fear, and disappointment. The person that could write a *good* letter must convey his sentiments just as simply as in common conversation; and, when this is the case, the folly of exclaiming, "I don't know what to say" is saying nothing to the purpose, and serves rather as an incitement to affront, than a palliative excuse.

After a long and tedious silence, the receipt of a letter absolutely petrifies me with anxiety, and I open it tremblingly alive to the anticipation of sorrow.

"Whenever," says the learned Huet, "I receive letters late, or very near the time of dining, I put them aside for another opportunity. Letters in general convey more bad news than good; so that, on reading them, either at night or at noon, I am sure to spoil my appetite or my repose."

Adieu, Mr. Editor,

From your most obedient,

X.

FOR THE LETTER-BOX.

A SONNET,

Composed, extempore, on the sea-shore, just after listening to some exquisite music.

Celestial music—influence divine!
That e'en canst cheer so lost a heart as mine;
Welcome, thrice welcome, to a soul that knows
Few gleams of sunshine 'midst a storm of woes;

Yet when I quit thee 'tis my lot to rove
(The ill-starr'd victim of desponding love)
Unfriended on the solitary shore,
Where o'er the sands conflicting billows roar.

Ah sad reverse! dread emblem of the doom
Ordain'd me from my cradle to my tomb;
In *youth*, soft melody entranced my mind,
Whilst Jane was true—and guardian angels kind;

But *now*, alas! the storm of fate prevails—
Lost is my helm, and shattered are my sails.

X.

REARING *of* CAPONS.

To the PRINTER,

SIR,

HAVING lately retired from business into the country, I have been much pleased and instructed by your useful publications, the Sherborne Mercury, and Weekly Entertainer, and trusting to your favourable construction, for this my address to you for information, on perhaps what you may think a trivial subject. I beg leave to state, that since my retirement, having frequently enquired for capons, I find they are a bird scarcely known, except by name, in the country, although formerly constituting a principal dish at an hospitable table; and are common in most countries *now*, except England. As the making and method of rearing capons for market appears to me to be in a great measure forgotten or nearly lost, I submit to you the propriety, through the channel of your widely extended papers, to furnish instructions on this subject of rural economy, to the farmer and cottager, as I think a capon exceeds the cock, in the same degree as the ox does the bull; submitting this rough sketch to your better information on rural affairs than I can presume to be,

I beg leave to subscribe myself,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,
And a constant reader,
H. & W.

November 7, 1808.

DESCRIPTION *of* VALENCIA, *in* SPAIN.

Written by a German Traveller.

THE Valencians are exceptions to the usual inhabitants of warm climates, being attentive to domestic order, cleanliness, and comforts, so that the polished stranger easily finds accommodation among them.

Provisions are abundant in Valencia, as might naturally be expected from the climate and state of agriculture; nay, I question whether there is any country where you may live at a cheaper rate.

To

To begin with bread; a pound of excellent wheaten bread is sold for three quartos and a half. If Valencia was not obliged to procure annually great quantities of wheat from La Mancha and the Levant, to supply its deficiency in that article, the price of bread would certainly be one-third lower.

The best beef is sold for seven quartos (two-pence) a pound, and the other kind of meat in proportion. A fowl costs sixteen quartos (about four-pence halfpenny); a pair of pigeons, from three to four quartos; and a dish of fish, for two or three persons, may be had for four-pence.

Vegetables, fruit, and the like, are in general extremely cheap. For a penny you may buy as much garden stuff as will suffice three or four persons for a meal. A water melon, of the largest size, costs three-pence, and a couple of pomegranates not quite a penny. For a penny you may purchase two large bunches of grapes, and a whole hatful of figs for half that price. Oranges, lemons, almonds, strawberries, and other fruits, are sold equally cheap.

The various articles of food in this country are extremely easy of digestion; and the vegetables, in particular, have very little substance. Let a person eat ever so heartily, he has no occasion to apprehend the slightest inconvenience. The pure elastic air and the wine of Alicante, which is an excellant stomachic, may, however, probably contribute to produce this effect. There is scarcely any commodity but what may be had at a price equally reasonable. For three or four reals a day, you may have a room neatly furnished, with an alcove and attendance. A silk cloak, which it is the fashion to wear here, costs from 28s. to 30s. and a fine cotton waistcoat, with breeches and a silk scarf, from 14s. to 18s. A pair of silk stockings may be bought for 5s. 6d. and fine linen is the only article of dress that can be called dear.

With respect to other things necessary for house-keeping, such as oil, wine, coffee, &c. they are all in generally very cheap. For three half-pence you have as much oil as you can use at a meal; and a bottle of excellent wine costs less than four-pence. A pound of coffee may be bought in time of peace for eight-pence, good sugar for nine or ten, and a pound of Caraccas chocolate for between fifteen and eighteen pence. The only articles which are comparatively dear, are wood and coal; nevertheless the annual expence for a small family on that account does not exceed 35s. or 40s.

These facts sufficiently demonstrate how cheap it is to live in Valencia. Fifty or sixty pounds sterling would be a handsome income for an individual.

The population of the city of Valencia consists of one hundred and five thousand souls.

A REVIEW *of the* EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

Written in America, in 1805.

THE present period invites to a retrospect of past time. To mark the revolutions that take place among the nations of the world, and the rotation of the opinions, customs, and manners of men, is at once pleasant and useful.

The intended review will be confined to the following particulars; the comparative state of the nations of the Christian world, at the commencement and at the close of the eighteenth century; the improvements of the above period in sciences and arts; the state of religion and moral philosophy; and the important events of our own country.

The beginning of the last century was a distinguished era in history. William and Mary were then the sovereigns of England; Louis XIV. was king of France; Charles XII. king of Sweden; and Peter the Great, czar of Russia. The civil constitution of England had then recently assumed a new form. The revolution in 1688 freed the nation from the fear of popery and of despotism. The doctrines of the divine and indefeasible right of the sovereign, and of passive obedience and non-resistance of the subject, were exploded; and the prerogatives of the crown, and the liberties of the people, were permanently settled. The extent of the commerce of England, and the strength of her navy, within this period, exceeded the former experience of nations. Although dismembered of most of her American colonies, she has acquired immense territories in the eastern world. Scotland and Ireland have been more closely united with her; and the same legislative powers are now exercised over the whole realm. With King William originated the practice of borrowing money upon the credit of the nation. At his death he left a public debt of fourteen millions sterling, then thought an enormous sum. This has been increased by every subsequent war, and now threatens the nation with serious evils.

The people of France, at the commencement of the last century, were enthusiasts in royalty; they were ready to sacrifice their property and their lives for the honour of their *grand monarque*. At its close, they executed their king, discarded their nobility, forswore monarchy, and assumed the language and forms of republicans. At that period they were the bigoted disciples of the Romish church; before the century revolved, they massacred their priests, and flung down the altars of their religion. In 1700 Louis XIV. was planning schemes of aggrandizement and universal empire; in 1800 the revolution of France issued in a military despotism, and her fortunate chief marched forward in his conquests with a speed,

for which his ambitious predecessor in power dared not to hope.

Spain had fallen from her greatness at the above-mentioned period; but she had not lost her national energy. She is now sunk in sloth and weakness, and has scarcely any influence upon the important events of Europe.

Holland was then rising in the strength of republican virtue and commercial enterprize; her public virtue now appears to be lost; her strength is certainly palsied.

The Swiss, then a generation of industry, sobriety, and happiness, are now convulsed by party dissention, oppressed by foreign requisitions, and miserable by the devastations of war.

Prussia, under the direction of her politic and martial monarch, grew up to a great and powerful kingdom, and early withdrawing from the war, which now rages with unprecedented destruction in Europe, she has reserved her numbers and resources.

The house of Austria, powerful and ambitious, has seen her richest provinces wrested from her; her resources are exhausted; and she wages unequal war with her too potent neighbour.

At the beginning of the century Poland was sovereign in her government, numerous in population, and influential in her national character. Her name, as a distinct and independent country, is now blotted from the register of nations.

The schemes of the Great Peter of Russia have been in operation for the last hundred years; under two discerning and ambitious female sovereigns, improvements of every kind have been made through the provinces of this extended empire. Russia is the only continental power that can now balance the weight of France.

Italy, with a great part of Europe, at the commencement of the century, acknowledged spiritual allegiance to the church of Rome; which impiously assumed the direction of the consciences of men, and pretended, by divine authority, to regulate the concerns of the human soul with its God; which in the support of spiritual tyranny has exercised oppressions and cruelties, at the review of which reason is abashed, and humanity mourns. At that period, although some parts of Christendom were too much enlightened to submit to her impositions, yet she then retained great influence in all the political transactions of Europe; the sovereign pontiff is now despoiled of civil power, is degraded from his exalted seat, is dependent on the will of an antichristian military despot, and is deprived of the means to do good or evil.

The once commercial and weighty republic of Venice has been

been bartered to the house of Austria, and most of the Italian states are now affiliated with the great nation.

These are the revolutions which, within the eighteenth century, changed the face of Europe. As the century began, so it closed, with war; a war perhaps more destructive to man, than Christian Europe ever before knew; a war originated by civil dissentions in France, which in atrocity and barbarity were only equalled by the massacres and devastations of the ancestors of Frenchmen upon the Roman empire.

Within the period of our review, improvements in arts and sciences have been great. Sir Isaac Newton was born in the seventeenth century, but he published some of his most valuable works in the eighteenth; and within it his discoveries have been more generally communicated, and the world more generally enlightened by them. The method of investigating truth, previously suggested by Lord Bacon, has been universally adopted. Hypotheses in philosophy have been exploded, and those principles alone are now admitted as legitimate, which are the result of fair and repeated experiments. The last century has raised electricity from darkness almost to perfect knowledge; and our own countryman led the way in this improvement. Great discoveries have been made in chemistry and in the properties of air. Men in their enterprize have essayed a new element; they have dared to sail in the ocean of the atmosphere; but this discovery promises little utility; the former are applied to the most important purposes of human life.

In astronomy, Herschel has added a planet to the solar system, and the great improvement in optics has enabled men of this science to take a more accurate survey of the heavenly bodies.

The healing art has received improvements. The human frame has been more accurately analyzed; the nature and operation of medicine more fully investigated; and in many instances a bolder, and a more successful practice adopted. Inoculation for the small-pox was the discovery of the last century; at least the commencement of the practice in the scientific nations of Europe was within this period. By it, one of the most formidable diseases incident to the human constitution is greatly alleviated. Recently, experiments of inoculation by the kine-pox fairly promise to banish the small-pox from human society. Should the attempt prove successful, it will be considered as one of the greatest discoveries of the world.

The arts, which lessen the labour of man, enlarge the basis of society, and add to our convenience and comfort, have been greatly improved.

Commerce

Commerce has unfurled her sails in every clime, and has united by her bands the family of man. An interchange now takes place between the nations of the earth, of the productions of every soil, and of the manufactures of every country. Scientific research has been blended with commercial enterprize. The Asiatic Society, composed of English literary characters, settled in the East Indies, have explored the ancient lore, which lay buried in the Sanscrit language. Their late president, the learned, the pious, the humane, Sir William Jones, pre-eminently distinguished himself in these researches. He brought to light the hidden treasures of past ages, and has thereby strengthened the evidence of the authenticity of the Old Testament.

An English and a Dutch embassy to the court of China have increased our knowledge of the customs and manners of this ancient and singular people.

Geography, within the last century, has been rendered more perfect. Cook has completed the map of the world; Bruce explored the sources of the Nile. Ledyard, Park, and Brown, have traced the course of the Niger, and laid the interior of Africa before our view.

Within the above period the English language was embellished; and the supposition is by some entertained, that it has passed its point of supreme excellence, and is on the decline. The first fifty years of the last century are selected, by some critics, as the Augustan age of the English language; and they say, that late English writers of celebrity sacrifice perspicuity to sound, and strength of composition to harmony of periods. Whatever may be the decision of cool judgment on this subject, the refined taste must be pleased with the copious, the flowing stream of Robertson, the polished diction of Gibbon, and the chaste neat style of Blair.

In institutions of humanity, the last century abounded. In these the English nation was conspicuous. Humane societies, and charity schools of various descriptions, were multiplied among them; and many measures of a public nature adopted to remove the sufferings, and alleviate the burthens, of man.

The eighteenth century was distinguished by numerous defences of Christianity, which satisfy the inquiring and the honest mind of its truth; and for various treatises on moral philosophy, which delineate the obligations of man, through all his relations, and deduce the duties of his character from the nature of his powers, and the condition of his action. It has also been distinguished by a flood of sceptical and profligate publications. Within this period infidelity has assumed a more daring attitude, and uttered her blasphemies in a bolder tone.

Within the last century the face of North America has been totally changed. Our population has increased in a degree probably unparalleled in the history of the world. The wilderness has flourished like the rose, and the desert become a fruitful field. Within this period we have obtained a name among the sovereign and independent nations of the earth; and free and liberal constitutions of civil government have been established through our country. Our literary institutions have been extended; and we have made honourable improvements in arts and sciences. We can number our proportion of distinguished characters on the roll of fame. As a patriot, a general, and a statesman, we reckon Washington, the glory of his age, and the honour of his race. In the science of civil government, we have Adams and Hamilton. In astronomy and the higher branches of the mathematics, Winthrop and Rittenhouse. In electricity, Franklin. In history, Ramsay, Belknap, and Minot. In natural history, Jefferson and Williams. In divinity, Mayhew, Edwards, Lathrop, and Clarke.

Method of observing St. Anthony's Day at Madrid, with an Account of the Brotherhoods of that City.

[From a Work lately published, entitled "A Picture of Madrid."]

ON the feast of this renowned patron of Spain, the tutelar saint of all tailors, a peculiar ceremony takes place with horses and mules. They receive the blessing, in St. Anthony's church, which is to protect them throughout the whole year from disorders and sinister accidents.

All the morning, a number of coachmen, with their horses and mules cleaned and trimmed out, are seen to stop before the church; each of them has a certain quantity of barley with him, and all wait with anxiety for the benediction. The monk appears. The beasts and the barley are consecrated, and the coachmen gallop off in triumph.

N.B. One half of the barley must be given to the church.

In the afternoon, when the siesta is over, the real ceremony takes place. A kind of procession, with horses, mules, and carriages, is seen to drive about St. Anthony's church, and the adjacent streets, with as much festive solemnity as in every other procession.

Coachmen, servants, equipages, but particularly the mules, must then be decorated in the best manner. They rival each other in tasteful and tasteless ornaments; it is, properly speaking, the feast of the mules. Never had the ribbon-manufacturers or the saddlers so much work bespoke; never have the mule-

mule-dressers so much to do as the last week before St. Anthony's day.

It is indeed worth while to look at their procession for a few minutes. The coachmen wear their laced gala liveries, long stiff queus, shining boots, and broad silver spurs, with as pious, grave, and diplomatic a mien, as if carrying the host. Most of them are Asturians, who have such a point of honour among them, as is scarce to be met with among the brothers of the whip in England.

However tedious this procession may be, yet the people of Madrid deem it a very entertaining spectacle, owing to the great number of spectators on the balconies and in the streets. They look at the different equipages; they criticise them; and coachmen and mules pass a kind of review. The parties throw sweet-meats or small oranges at each other, or have some intrigue or gallantry in view—in a word, they divert themselves in honour of St. Anthony.

COFRADIAS, OR BROTHERHOODS.

The truly laudable institution of these beneficent bodies of men, whose sole end is to perform offices of charity to the indigent and the afflicted, has an excellence here which is not to be found in many other countries of Europe, where pathetic advertisements, addressed to the feelings of the public, or recommendations which the powerful interest of patronage alone can procure, are absolutely required to effect what is done at Madrid every day with the utmost secrecy, and without the least ostentation, by the cofradias, or brotherhoods.

The metropolis of Spain abounds with them. They are more or less numerous or active. The most eminent are the holy royal brotherhood of Our Lady of Refuge, and that of Our Lady of Hope, which count the most distinguished persons among the number of their members. The former expended, in 1798, in pious offices, the sum of 526,925 reals, and the latter 74,949. The items in their annual account are specified to be benefactions on visiting the sick in the hospitals; defraying the expences of sending poor sick people to the baths, and lunatics to the hospital of Saragossa—the education of poor children—suppers for the sick in the hospital—conveyance of poor patients—masses for the repose of the dead—alms—marriages of the poor—relief to pregnant women, with illegitimate children—expences for missionaries—house-rent, and weekly allowances for indigent persons, &c.

These two brotherhoods never fail affording relief to distressed objects; they even purposely go in search of them; nay, their generosity exceeds all the praise which the pen can bestow.

The brotherhood of Hope, formerly known by the title of Mortal Sin, make it a peculiar point to convert their fellow-Christians, living, as the Roman Catholic stiles it, in a state of mortal sin. Unfortunate women of the town are the special objects of their attention.

To accomplish this end, two brothers go about every night with lanthorns to collect alms. With regard to the women of the town the brotherhood finds them in every thing they want, to convey them to the Convent of Repentance, which is destined for their reception.

One more of these brotherhoods, called the brotherhood of bread and eggs, La Cofradia de Pany Hueros, deserves particular mention.

Its members, who derive their name from their employment, walk the streets, especially in winter, in quest of the poor, the wandering, and the helpless, that have no sheltering place. They conduct them to a particular lodging-house, give them a bed, and dismiss them in the morning with a loaf of bread and a couple of eggs. A very humane occupation, since Madrid does not want for unfortunate people, who are sometimes obliged, even in the inclemency of the winter, to pass the night under the church doors, or the porches of convents.

Mr. Fox's Contrasted Characters of Oliver Cromwell and General Washington.

FROM the execution of the king to the death of Cromwell, the government was, with some variation of forms, in substance monarchial and absolute, as a government established by a military force will almost invariably be, especially when the exertions of such a force are continued for any length of time. If to this general rule our own age, and a people whom their origin and near relation to us would almost warrant us to call our own nation, have afforded a splendid and perhaps a solitary exception, we must reflect not only, that a character of virtues so happily tempered by one another, and so wholly unalloyed with any vices, as that of Washington, is hardly to be found in the pages of history, but that even Washington himself might not have been able to act his most glorious of all parts, without the existence of circumstances uncommonly favourable, and almost peculiar to the country which was to be the theatre of it. Virtue like his depends not indeed upon time or place; but although in no country or time would he have degraded himself into a Pisistratus, or a Cæsar, or a Cromwell, he might have shared the fate of Cato, or a De Witt; or, like Ludlow and Sidney, have mourned in exile the lost liberties of his country.

With

With the life of the protector almost immediately ended the government which he had established. The great talents of this extraordinary person had supported, during his life, a system condemned equally by reason and by prejudice; by reason, as wanting freedom; by prejudice, as an usurpation; and it must be confessed to be no mean testimony to his genius, that, notwithstanding the radical defects of such a system, the splendour of his character and exploits render the æra of the protectorship one of the most brilliant in English history. It is true his conduct in foreign concerns is set off to advantage, by a comparison of it with that of those who preceded, and who followed him. If he made a mistake in espousing the French interest instead of the Spanish, we should recollect, that in examining this question we must divest our minds entirely of all the considerations which the subsequent relative state of those two empires suggest to us, before we can become impartial judges in it; and at any rate, we must allow his reign, in regard to European concerns, to have been most glorious when contrasted with the pusillanimity of James the First, with the levity of Charles the First, and the mercenary meanness of the two last princes of the house of Stuart. Upon the whole, the character of Cromwell must ever stand high in the list of those, who raised themselves to supreme power by the force of their genius; and among such, even in respect of moral virtue, it would be found to be one of the least exceptionable, if it had not been tainted with that most odious and degrading of all human vices, hypocrisy.

Preventatives against the Ravages of the Moth.

To the EDITOR,

SIR,

THERE is no particular season of the year when this insect begins its ravages; its eggs are deposited in the corner of a box, or on cloth, &c. where they remain until a worm is produced by the heat of the weather, or of the room, and in the course of a few days a chrysalis is formed, similar to that of all butterflies. It is previous to this state that the injury is done, by the worm feeding on whatever happens to have been its nest; and I have often destroyed them while they were working into the thread of a cloth.

The most usual preventatives against the injury occasioned by the moth, are cedar-wood and tobacco-leaves. A piece of the former put into a box, if sufficiently large to emit its peculiar odour to whatever may be contained in it, will effectually preserve the cloth from injury; and it is well known, that in libraries

libraries where there are books bound with Russia leather, which is tanned with cedar, no moth or worm will corrupt. It is common to put cedar shavings and chips into boxes, &c. which answer just as well as the wood itself.

Tobacco-leaves may be placed at certain intervals in the folds of a piece of woollen cloth; and it is sufficient to examine them once in six months, in order to renew the leaves, if necessary.

Many persons wrap their woollens in coarse brown paper, and this is found to save them from the depredation of the moth. I should conclude that the smell of pitch and tar retained by this kind of paper from the rope and oakum, with which it is principally made, causes the offence to the moth; and if so, a cheap remedy is easily obtained, by anointing with tar and pitch the shelves of shops and warehouses.

An exposure to fresh air will free cloth, &c. from the worm, by causing a quick formation of the moth; but the injury is previously done; for I do not think that the fly feeds at all on the wool, and that when it is met with in cloth, it is then about to deposit the eggs.

It is remarkable that the moth never flies in the day-time, unless when disturbed; and then it soon seeks for a resting-place; this, probably, is the cause why it is considered as belonging to the class of dormants. At night we see it invariably "fly in circling eddies" around a candle, until it is destroyed by the flame. I have often observed it, with a wing or leg scorched, fall on the table, and renew its little flight, as if determined to be burnt. I have as often endeavoured to lessen its sufferings, by crushing it when in a wounded state; but its sight seemed to be so very perfect, as to enable it to avoid the touch.

Your's, &c.

M. B.

ORIGIN *of* BANKERS.

THE origin of bankers, say the French writers in general, goes as far back as the invention of bills of exchange, under Philip Augustus, who reigned in the year 1181. The Jews, driven from France, sought refuge in Normandy, where they gave merchant-strangers and travellers "Lettres secretes," upon those to whom they had confided their effects in France, and which were acknowledged.

The Ghibelines did the same when they were forced to quit Italy. And from these the custom of bills of exchange and the establishment of bankers arose in cities of commerce. (See the Dictionaire des Origines, v. Banquires.)

In

In our own country, as early as the reign of Henry the Third, we find the monasteries used as the principal repositories of treasure. Henry himself lodged his money at the New Temple, by the Strand; (Pat. 29, Hen. III. m. 3, &c.) while that of William de Valence, his brother, appears to have been deposited at Waltham. Henry, by a patent dated 1258, (Rymer Fœd vol. i. p. 663) draws for three thousand marks of his brother's money so deposited; and desires that the "residui denariorum dicti fratris nostri," may be safely preserved.

In the next reign we find banking assume more of the appearance of a mercantile concern; and, apparently, engrossed by foreign traders.

From Rymer, (Fœd. vol. ii pp. 953, 1051,) we learn that, at this period, a company of Florentine merchants, of the house of the Friscobaldi, were the king's bankers for foreign parts. Such also were the "Societas de Spines," who were the pope's bankers. The Cansini formed another firm of some notoriety. And in the wardrobe accounts of the 28th of Edward the First, we read of the Mercatores de Luk (perhaps Lucca) in the same capacity. (Compot. Garderobæ 28, Edw. i. pp. 317, 329.)

The bardi, another set of merchants, are mentioned in the fourth year of Edward the Third, to whom the customs of the kingdom appear to have been farmed. (Pat 4, Edw. 3, p. 2. m. 10.)

Lombard-street, where so many of our present bankers reside, in the metropolis, is said originally to have received its name from the numerous foreign merchants, Lombards, who made it the quarter of their residence, and, if the satire of Piers Plowman may be relied on, they must have begun the practices of usury at a very early period.

> "I learned amonge Lumberdes and Jewes a lesson
> To wey pence with a payes, and pare the heviest."
>
> Pass. v. sign. G. 1, edit. 1550.

Specie, it will be remembered, was at that period the only wealth which could be deposited.

RUSSIAN LITERATURE.

THE progress of literature among the Russians has been hitherto very slow and gradual. In power, in splendour, in warlike achievements, they perhaps equal any other nation in Europe. But it required all the commanding authority of Peter the Great, and the fostering encouragement of the late

Empress Catherine, to raise them from the state of barbarism in which they had been involved for so many centuries. All the literature of the early ages is absolutely confined to the obscure annals of Nestor and Nikon, and it was not 'till the beginning of the last century that Theophanes Procopovitz, archbishop of Novogorod, first began to disseminate a taste for the sciences, and to encourage them by his example and protection.

To him succeeded in history, Kilcop, and Prince Scherebatof. But if we except the travels of the celebrated Pallas, the Historical Researches of Muller, and some other works upon natural history; no literary production worthy of being noticed has distinguished Russia during the reign of Catherine II. Natural history and mathematics are the only sciences which the Russians have contributed in some degree to advance, and even those, however trifling, have been by the help of Germany; yet no country is so fortunately situated for rendering the sciences the most essential services. Natural and ancient history might expect from her the most astonishing discoveries. The ruins of twenty cities attest that Tartary and Mongrelia were once inhabited by polished nations, and the monuments which are still discovering, would have realised the sublime conceptions of Buffon and Bailli; whole libraries have been discovered under the ruins of Alai-kitt, and amid the ruinous heaps which skirt the Irtish. Thousands of manuscripts in unknown languages, and many others in the languages of the Chinese, the Kalmucs, and the Mantschoux, are perishing in the mouldy deserted cabinets of the academy; had they remained under the ruins 'till a government less barbarous had brought them to light, they would have been better preserved.

Lomonosof distinguished himself in several departments of literature, and ranks high as a poet; but of all the native Russians likely to be known by other countries, the most extraordinary genius was Sumorokof, who may be called the Shakespeare of Russia, and the founder of its drama.

He was born at Moscow in 1727, but received his education at St. Petersburg, where he obtained the protection of Count Schovalof, the favourite of the Empress Elizabeth. An early admiration of the French drama, and particularly for the works of Racine, of whom he always spoke with enthusiasm, led him to devote his whole time to dramatic studies. His first tragedy of "Koref," was the only piece in Russia which was not a series of nonsense. The great success of Koref attracted the notice of the empress, who commanded the play to be performed before her, and encouraged the author to persevere in his pursuits. In the following years he successively produced the tragedies of Hamlet, Aristona, the False Demetrius, Zemira,

and others; besides the comedies of the Judge, the Tutor, the Envious Man, the Impostor, &c. &c. and three operas.

Sumorokof had no reason to complain either of his country, or of the times in which he lived. Elizabeth raised him to the rank of brigadier in the army, and appointed him manager of the theatre, with a pension of 1800 roubles. Catherine II. made him counsellor of state, invested him with the order of St. Anne, conferred on him honours and wealth 'till his death, which happened in 1777, at Moscow, in the 51st year of his age.

Notwithstanding all these advantages, Sumorokof possessed too much of the *genus irritabile vatum*, to be happy. Blessed with talents the most uncommon, and endowed with superior accomplishments, he had all those eccentricities and defects which usually accompany genius. His character as an author was that of sensibility bordering on peevishness, which would not suffer him to submit to criticism, even where it was well founded; and the excessive applause and flattery of his countrymen, working upon a disposition naturally proud and vain, induced him to form the most extravagant opinion of himself, and of the particular line of literature in which he excelled.

AN ANECDOTE.

THE great Gustavus Adolphus, like our immortal Lord Nelson, in the midst of his conquests, preserved sentiments of modesty and piety rarely to be found in a conqueror surrounded with glory. On his return into Saxony, soon after the battle of Butzen, the people received him with the most enthusiasm acclamations. Turning to his chaplain, Fabricius, he said, "All this really hurts me: but I hope God will not punish me for the folly of this people. Do not you see that these people consider me as something more than human? Great God! thou art my witness, how very different these vain applauses are from the sentiments of my heart!"

This excellent sentiment naturally leads us to conclude that the Swedish monarch possessed an excellent understanding, and a religious disposition, and had too much self-knowledge to think over highly of himself.

A QUESTION, *by T. Bullock, of St. Columb.*

DIVIDE 100 into two such parts that the sum of the greater and less be to the sum of their squares in the ratio of 50 to 2789.

Answer, by Radius, of Ross Revelstoke School, to T. K's Rebus, inserted the 3d of October.

THE texture, Sir, I found to be
That ancient work call'd TAPESTRY.

*** Similar answers have been received from S. Duck, and Frederic Arden, of South Petherton; W. D. Champion, of Bridgewater; John Woodman, of North Curry; William Petherick, of St. Austell; Hester Easter, of Poole; J. W. of Charmouth; and R. Loosemore, of Tiverton.

Answer, by S. Duck, of South Petherton, to F. Arden's Rebus, inserted the 3d of October.

MAY ev'ry murd'rer, lur'd by gold or hate,
On the dread GIBBET meet his wretched fate!

☞ Similar answers have been received from W. D. Champion, of Bridgewater, a youth; R. Loosemore, of Tiverton; and J. Saunders, of Exeter.

Answer, by J. Melhuish, of Bridgewater, to W. D. Champion's Enigma, inserted the 10th of October.

NEAR the town of Bridgewater in which I reside,
On the banks of the Parret where high flows the tide,
The MALT-KILN-TILE fashion'd and burnt I have seen,
Which solves your enigma, friend Champion, I ween.

†§† A similar answer has been received from H. B. of Bridgewater.

An ANAGRAM, *by J. Saunders, of Exeter.*

TWO instruments aright combine,
A dance you quickly will define.

A REBUS, *by R. Loosemore, of Tiverton.*

SAGACIOUS youths, well-vers'd in lore,
I beg you will a fish explore,
That's oft in markets sold;
Transpose it right, ye bards of fame,
And add a letter to the same,
A bird you will behold.

A CHARADE, *by Tyro, of Chard.*

TO find my first, I pray you'll scan
A part of dress that's worn by man;
Tho' not now common, there's no doubt,
But you'll soon find the myst'ry out;
When that you've done, then next proceed
To what Columbus did succeed;
At sight of which his thanks were given
In rapturous gratitude to Heaven:
Both parts unite, and then you'll see
The place of my nativity.

POETRY;

POETRY.

For the WEEKLY ENTERTAINER.

LATE REPENTANCE.

WHILE false Lycaon proudly flies
To boast his triumph unrelenting,
In lonely woe Amanda sighs,
Too late her easy faith repenting.

He leads the dance, perfumes his hair,
Some other virgin's shame pursuing;
She wrings her hands in wild despair,
And vainly weeps o'er her undoing.

Ye beauteous maids! whose bosoms glow
With gentler flames of pu e affection,
Oh! turn to sooth a sister's woe;
Oh! let her fate be your protection.

Oh! guard against betraying man,
Your spotless fame, your virgin treasure;
Let not his sigh your bosom pain,
His lip inflame your soul to pleasure.

A bee, amid the pride of spring,
The rose's dewy sweets collected,
Then gaily spread his roving wing,
And left his fading flower neglected.

Thus man the bloom of beauty wastes,
From innocence untimely parted;
Thus to decay Amanda hastes,
In silence, drooping, broken-hearted.

The hour of female frailty ne'er
Is by the cruel world forgiv'n;
Yet weep, Oh weep! ill-fated fair,
Thy tears may win the grace of Heav'n.

Thy mother mourns; thy shame is told;
Thy father's days shall pass in sorrow;
Thy lip is pale; thy cheek is cold;
Thy grave shall hide thy woe to-morrow.

Like thee, of ev'ry hope deny'd,
Lycaon's guilty soul shall languish;
Disease and scorn shall blast his pride;
Remorse convert his hours to anguish.

Plymouth, October 29, 1808. R. WITHALL.

BATTLE OF BAYLEN.

ROLL, Andujar,* roll thy flood,
Dy'd of old with Moorish blood!

Swell

* A river, which runs near Baylen.

Swell thy tide!
Flow with pride!
Flow for ever fam'd in story,
Lo again thy banks are spread
With our foes: the vanquish'd dead,
Wel'tring lie all pale and gory.
Umbla‡ saw, in strange affright,
By the moon's uncertain light,
In thy stream
Helmets gleam.
Baylen heard the tempest rattle,
Horse to horse, man to man,
Ere the dawn the charge began
To the brazen roar of battle
As the wintry torrent sweeps
Down Morena's* ravag'd steeps
Rush'd the foe
To o'erthrow
Spain! the bulwark of thy glory:
As old Calpe† braves the flood
Our unshaken phalanx stood;
Brothers, sons, and fathers hoary.
Alentejo¶ with the shock
Felt her vine-clad summits rock.
Gueva's vale,
Hill and dale,
Trembl'd with the mighty motion.
Guadalquiver's‖ current fled
Swiftly from his troubl'd bed,
Foaming like the angry ocean.
Faulchion, pike, and bayonet,
Smote and pierc'd, and clashing met,
On the plain
Strew'd with slain.
Charg'd with fate's avenging power,
Thro' the fleeting shades of night
Flash'd the vollied rage of light;
Fell like hail the deadly show'r.
Long and bloody was the strife,
Trumpet, drum, and thrilling pipe,
Groans and cries
Pierc'd the skies,
Death's loud organ swell'd the chorus:
Raging like a stream of fire
Burst out old Iberia's ire,
Fast consuming all before us.
Weep! ye hapless maids of Gaul,
Weep your absent lovers' fall!
In despair
Rend your hair,
Weep! beside your willowy fountains:
Wan beneath the frowning sky,
Gash'd with wounds they vanquish'd lie
On our Andalusian mountains.
The wolf at midnight laps their blood,
Their limbs shall glut the eagle's brood:
Tyrant, haste!
To the feast,
Erect thy crest! be bloodier, bolder!
Behold thy conquest! claim thy spoil!
Thy heroes shall possess our toil:
Yes, there they shall unburied moulder.

‡ An eminence near the scene of action. * A mountain of Spain.
† The rock of Gibraltar. ¶ A province of Spain. ‖ A river in Andalusia.